

MINUTES
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2006
REGULAR SESSION
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL
7:00 PM

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order in open session at 7:00 PM in the Selectmen's Room of Town Hall. All members were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were also present.

Questions from Town Residents

There were no questions.

Action by Appointment

Discussion of Town's 150th Anniversary Celebration

Town Clerk Delores Keefe, Town Historian Dick Betts, and Victoria Haase from the Belmont Historical Society appeared before the Board to discuss how to proceed with planning for this event.

Mr. Betts reviewed the Town's celebration of the bicentennial in 1976, which included 45 different events over a year and a half and a giant parade. The committee at that time raised \$2,200 in donations and the Town voted the committee an additional \$8,000. The committee ended up with \$126 left over. The parade was the event which cost the most money and would probably cost the most money again. One of the biggest events was a heritage festival with 50 different ethnic groups represented with foods, arts and crafts.

Ms. Haase said that the Board should decide whether it wants a small, medium, or large celebration and then appoint an executive committee of a few people.

The Board clarified that the 150th anniversary is on March 18 of 2009 – not this year! There was agreement that we would like to have a gala celebration and fundraise aggressively rather than spend a lot of our own money. There was discussion of the time frame over which events would take place.

Jim Staton, President of the Belmont Historical Society, joined the meeting.

The Board asked the four guests, led by Ms. Haase, to come up with some recommendations as to whom to appoint to a steering committee and to report back in

about a month. The Board thanked them for coming and for bringing this matter to their attention.

Discussion of Verizon's Work in Town

Ms. Carol Baribeau from Verizon appeared before the Board. She updated the Board on progress Verizon has made on service issues. The company met with residents after the November Board meeting and found that its records were incorrect. An old job from 10 years ago that Verizon thought was completed had not been completed and the wiring in the neighborhood was very deteriorated. Verizon has done work since then, some of which has caused service outages which the company has worked through. Verizon rebuilt five handhole splices serving the neighborhood in question and finished a copper replacement of one section of cable which cleared up some problems. Verizon expressed their gratitude to neighborhood resident Dix Campbell for his help in notifying residents of work being done and getting their feedback back to the company when there were issues that needed to be resolved.

The Board echoed Verizon's thanks to Mr. Campbell.

Verizon believes that the issues it found have now been resolved. It has been almost two weeks since they know of any issues. Residents who were present in the audience agreed that they have not had any recent problems. Verizon will be going into the neighborhood with fiber optic service now that it has fixed the current service.

The Board expressed its satisfaction that Verizon has worked to solve these problems.

Discussion of Use of Handicapped Parking Fine Fees

Disability Access Commission Chair Ray Glazier appeared before the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Glazier explained that the Commission was trying to figure out how to have a significant impact with the small amount of money available from handicapped parking fines. It wasn't enough to fix a building or put in ramps. The Commission is looking to produce a professional quality DVD video, to be filmed in Belmont with local people, which would portray issues of parking and facilities access for people with disabilities. This could be used for presentations to committees and to gain media attention.

The Board expressed its approval of the idea, noting that there is only \$47,000 in the account after about ten years. The Board asked if the money were doubled, if some other use would be preferred. Mr. Glazier said perhaps, but the beauty of this proposal is that by raising awareness and sensitivity it will help people with all kinds of disabilities, not just those in wheelchairs, for example.

There was discussion of the idea of a guide for people with disabilities to help them know which businesses in town are able to accommodate their needs. Mr. Glazier noted that the Commission has not had the staff to do something like this. The Board felt it would be

good to highlight the businesses that are accessible. Mr. Glazier said that one of the vignettes for the video would show a blind person going into a restaurant with a guide dog and being told the dog cannot come in.

There was agreement that a guide to business would be a good summer project for a college intern and the Board expressed its willingness to fund such a project.

The Board moved: to authorize the Treasurer to pay the first invoice for the video project in the amount of \$7,987.50, and any subsequent invoices that come in up to a total amount of \$24,999.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Discussion of Beer and Wine Licenses for Stores

Ms. Elena Benoit, a store owner in Winchester, appeared before the Board. She noted that she grew up in Belmont and is seeking to open a specialty food and wine store like the one she has in Winchester which has been doing very well. The store sells over 100 different cheeses and everything one might need for an upscale party. It also offers wine and cheese classes. Ms. Benoit explained that she has become a veteran of the legal changes associated with this type of store after going through the process of changing the licensing laws in Winchester. She stated that 97% of Town Meeting in Winchester voted in favor of this.

The Board agreed that it is in favor of this proposal and now needs to figure out how to differentiate between this type of store and allowing a package store.

Ms. Benoit indicated she would prefer to have a full liquor license rather than a beer and wine only license. However the store would not sell nips or half-pints, lottery tickets or cigarettes. The idea is that if someone needs a 750ml bottle of alcohol for their party they can get everything in one place. The focus is on the wine and the food. She noted that her store doesn't really make money from the liquor but may gain customers from it who would otherwise shop elsewhere.

Chairman Solomon said he felt there would be a better chance of passing this without the full liquor license and Selectman Firenze agreed.

Mr. Younger spoke as a former member of the Town's Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Committee. He noted there were some members of the current commission that will have concerns about this. Selectman Brownsberger suggested that the Board can ask the Committee to develop some regulations that will guide this and will help it to pass the ballot.

There was discussion of how many licenses the Town would want. By passing a home rule petition at the state level, we can approve fewer than 5 beer and wine licenses. Winchester approved one full liquor license and two beer and wine licenses on separate

questions. Both passed by over 75% at the ballot. The Board thought this was a good formula and agreed to go for two articles with the same number of licenses as Winchester.

There was discussion of how to limit who would get a license. Winchester's guidelines were very strict and included rules about what percentage of sales would come from alcohol, but were not part of the actual legislation. The Board agreed to forward a draft of what it wants to put on the ballot to the Licensing Committee for their comment.

The Board moved: to ask the Town Administrator to develop a pair of articles to add 1 alcohol and 2 beer and wine licenses and forward them to the Alcohol Beverage Licensing Committee to ultimately be placed on the ballot for April Town Meeting.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Discussion of FY07 Budget

Selectman Firenze reported that the Warrant Committee agreed at its last meeting that if we took \$700,000 from free cash to balance the operating budget it would not jeopardize our bond rating, but the Committee did not take a position on doing so.

The Board discussed how to communicate with the town on the roads override question. Selectman Firenze shared an e-mail he received from a resident who felt that the ballot question would be confusing and thought that the operating transfer from capital should be voted on separately from the roads override. Mr. Firenze expressed his preference for splitting the question. The Board noted that the ballot question has already been submitted to the Town Clerk, but it is important that we communicate with the voters exactly how this will work and what it does. It was noted that the Board cannot put an explanation of the question on the ballot itself. The Board discussed drafting a letter explaining the proposal with the input of the Warrant Committee that simply states the objective facts of what is being proposed without advocating.

The Board agreed that we must be clear that we are establishing a locked-in \$3 million fund for roads through an override which will replace the current informal \$1 million capital program, and that \$1 million will be transferred to the operating budget. Selectman Brownsberger will forward the written conception that he had put down for his own use to the Board, and Chairman Solomon will arrange for Selectman Firenze to sit down with a couple of volunteers from the Warrant Committee to use that document as a basis to generate an accurate neutral statement for the edification of the voters.

The Board agreed it needs to focus on its budget cuts and adds at its March 13 meeting.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger reported that the Fire Station RFP draft is completed and will go out to boards and committees tomorrow and to Town Counsel. Feedback should be in within 10 days. The communications tower at the cemetery site is coming along and hopefully will be operational within a week or so. Once it is up and running the old tower will come down. The Archdiocese will be submitting a proposal for a lease extension of the Senior Center – hopefully sometime this week. The Town has been doing increased crosswalk enforcement on Trapelo Road with very visible signage. For now, we will wait and see how red light cameras work out in other towns before doing anything with that.

Action by Writing

Approval of Letter to Legislators re: Request for Support to End Lottery Diversion and Return Lottery Revenues

The Board moved: to approve both letters to State Senator Tolman and to State Representative Anne Paulsen.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0) and all board members signed the letter.

Action by Consent

Approval of BOS Minutes (01/09/06, 01/21/06, 01/23/06, 01/28/06, 01/30/06)

The Board moved: to approve all the minutes for the 01/09/06, 01/21/06, 01/23/06, 01/28/06 and 01/30/06 Selectmen's meetings.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0)

Application for Licenses and Permit – Renewals
Used Car Dealer's License – Class II
Bassam Saliba D/B/A TNT Service, 55 Brighton Street
Victualler's License
New Asia, 93 Trapelo Road

The Board moved: to approve the Used Car Dealer's license – Class II for TNT Service and the Victualler license for New Asia.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Other

The Board asked the Town Administrator to put a resolution before Town Meeting honoring the passing of Jim Flett. The Board also asked him to convey to DPW Director Peter Castanino its approval of his idea to allow a few cars to park in the Waverley parking lot overnight during snow events.

Selectman Brownsberger is meeting tomorrow with the resident engineer on the Pleasant Street project for an update. He also noted that the bike path project is in jeopardy for funding reasons. Mr. Conti added that a joint meeting of Somerville, Cambridge, and Belmont has been proposed to discuss how to move forward with the project. We have indicated our willingness to participate.

Selectman Firenze suggested for the farmer's market – rather than approaching individual businesses for feedback, that Mr. Younger get the input of the Belmont Center Business Development group and if they are supportive, move ahead with the farmer's market on a 1 year basis. Mr. Younger reminded the Board that to use the Claflin parking lot for this would require the Board's approval. Chairman Solomon said that Mr. Younger is working on some alternatives but we need to make a decision soon.

The Board moved: to delegate authority to the Town Administrator to approve the use of the Cross Street side of the Claflin parking lot for a farmer's market on 19 parking spaces for one day a week, June 15 to October 26 as long as the Belmont Center business community is advised.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: to approve the charge of the Security Committee which that Committee has drafted.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Action by Appointment

Discussion of Litigation - Executive Session

Discussion of Contract Negotiation - Executive Session

The Board moved: to enter executive session for a discussion of litigation and a discussion of contract negotiation.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board of Selectmen entered executive session at 8:45 PM.

(During the executive session one substantive motion was made and passed. The Board adjourned at 10:45 PM.)

Thomas G. Younger
Town Administrator